

CHAPTER 21 MERGERS

[Prior to 11/24/04, see 581—Ch 21]

495—21.1(97B) Procedures for merger of qualified pension plans with IPERS.

21.1(1) Effective January 1, 2003, IPERS will begin accepting qualified pension plans for merger into the IPERS pension plan. This merger process shall provide for the transfer of all active and inactive members, retired members, and beneficiaries of retired members of the merging plan into IPERS, except as otherwise agreed to by IPERS and the merging plan.

21.1(2) The merging plan shall transfer assets to IPERS in an amount equal to the actuarial accrued liability created for IPERS as the result of the transfer of pension obligations owed to active, inactive and retired members of the merging plan. Said actuarial accrued liability shall be determined using the merging plan's membership data, the IPERS benefit structure, and the current IPERS actuarial valuation assumptions as of the date of the transfer.

21.1(3) All years of service under the merging plan shall be recognized by IPERS for purposes of determining eligibility and vested status and calculating IPERS benefits.

21.1(4) All wage records for current active members shall be summarized on the quarterly basis used by IPERS to determine a member's IPERS benefits. IPERS will not independently verify wage records, but will monitor those records to ensure that IRC Section 401(a)(17) limits are not exceeded.

21.1(5) The merging plan's actuary may determine that the accrued benefit of an active or inactive member of the merging plan exceeds the member's accrued IPERS benefits based on the merging plan's membership data and the IPERS benefit structure. The compensation of such individuals for any difference between the monthly benefit they accrued in the merging plan and the benefit they will have under IPERS shall be at the merging plan's sole discretion, and IPERS shall have no liability.

21.1(6) The same methods of conversion and cash out will be used for terminated vested members with a current plan account in the merging plan and for members, if any, who previously elected to freeze their accounts in the former plan to begin participation in IPERS.

21.1(7) The merging plan's retired members shall receive annuity payments from IPERS in the same forms and amounts as provided in the merging plan, provided those forms of payment are available under IPERS. If any retired member from the merging plan is also receiving a benefit from IPERS and the forms of benefits under the two plans differ, the retired member must agree to have the benefit payable from the merging plan converted and paid in the same form as the benefit under IPERS. Dividends for retired members transferred to IPERS shall be determined based on the first month of entitlement under the merging plan.

21.1(8) The monthly benefit payable to transferred members (excluding retired members) by IPERS may be greater or less than the monthly benefit they would have received under the merging plan. IPERS shall not be responsible for any difference in the two benefit amounts. It shall be the sole responsibility of the merging plan to ensure the protection of the accrued benefits of the merging plan's members and beneficiaries.

21.1(9) IPERS may agree to accept in-kind transfers of assets in satisfaction of the liabilities created by the merger, but may, in IPERS' sole discretion, decline all in-kind asset transfers and demand cash to fund the merger.

495—21.2(97B) Mandatory merger criteria.

21.2(1) General. Mergers shall meet the following criteria:

a. There shall be no actuarial gain or loss to IPERS (defined as a change in the unfunded accrued actuarial liability) as a result of a merger with another pension plan.

b. The merging plan shall defend and hold IPERS harmless from any claims by transferred members with respect to employee contribution accounts, cut-back claims, tax issues, and any other cause of action arising hereunder that does not result from IPERS' negligence or misconduct. This indemnification shall also extend to any contractual claims by the merging plan's vendors, pending or threatened lawsuits or regulatory actions against the merging plan, and appeals by members, retired members and beneficiaries of the merging plan.

c. Prior to the merger date, the merging plan authority and IPERS shall formally agree on all material terms and conditions of the merger in writing.

d. The merging plan authority shall adopt by resolution a proposal to merge the pension plan with and into the IPERS pension plan, with IPERS as the surviving plan, which shall incorporate by reference the details of the merger expressed in the merger agreement between the merging plan and IPERS. The merging plan authority shall secure all other approvals necessary to the merger, and shall certify to IPERS that all necessary authorizations have been received.

e. All assets required to fund the transfer of liabilities created under the merger shall be transferred to IPERS within 120 days after the proposed effective date, plus an additional amount representing a 7.5 percent interest rate (or the current rate assumed by IPERS' actuary in valuing assets and liabilities) commencing on the proposed effective date.

f. After the merger, the merging plan authority, as a covered employer, shall determine employee classifications and deduct and forward member and employer contributions in the same amount as required for all IPERS covered employment.

g. The merging plan authority shall transfer to IPERS in a mutually agreed upon method all employment records for active, inactive, and retired members and beneficiaries, including all tax reporting records. In addition to employment and tax reporting records, transferred electronic files shall include the same enrollment information as required for IPERS covered employers' new employees. Similar demographic information shall be provided to IPERS for spouses and beneficiaries.

h. The merging plan shall, prior to merger, in its sole discretion, make such amendments to its plan documents that it deems to be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the merger, provided that no such amendments shall vary the terms of the agreement to merge without the express written consent of IPERS.

i. IPERS shall, prior to merger, in its sole discretion, make such amendments to its plan documents that it deems to be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the merger, provided that no such amendments shall vary the terms of the agreement to merge without the express written consent of the merging plan.

j. The transferred records of the merging plan shall be treated as confidential records by IPERS as described in Iowa Code section 97B.17.

k. The merging plan authority and its legal and actuarial advisors shall determine the excess accruals, if any, owed to any member of the merging plan transferred to IPERS; shall provide such members with the appropriate election forms and related information; and shall take all steps necessary to complete the payment of compensation to such individuals in satisfaction of the obligation to protect accrued benefits under the merging plan as described above.

l. Excluding matters relating to the distribution of excess accruals, if any, the merging plan authority, its legal counsel, and IPERS and its legal counsel shall jointly develop all required communications regarding the plan merger. IPERS shall have sole responsibility for providing benefits estimates to the merging plan members, in anticipation of the merger. Following the effective date of the merger, all member services shall be handled by IPERS.

m. Following the merger, transferred active, inactive, and retired members and beneficiaries shall be entitled to benefits, including monthly allowances, refunds, actuarial equivalent (AE), death benefits and dividends as other IPERS members having the same demographic, wage and service records.

n. The members of the merging plan who currently have binding assignments against their benefits shall continue to have those assignments administered by IPERS as described in 495—Chapter 16 or as otherwise required by law.

o. The members of the merging plan currently receiving disability retirement benefits must agree to have their disability retirement benefits administered by IPERS as described under 495—Chapter 13, or those members shall not be transferred.

p. The merging plan and IPERS shall jointly agree whether the merger will be submitted to the IRS for approval.

21.2(2) Reserved.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 97B.42C.

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